



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES BARRON, CHIPPEWA, CLARK, DUNN, EAU CLAIRE, PEPIN, PIERCE, POLK, ST. CROIX

March
2005

More jobseekers push unemployment rates up in February

The unemployment for the nine-county region of West Central Wisconsin rose in February to 6.7 percent from 6.2 percent in January. Unemployment rates in seven West Central counties were among the 68 counties statewide that posted higher rates in February. The Wisconsin unadjusted unemployment rate increased from 5.4 percent in January to 5.8 percent in February while the national rate rose from 5.7 to 5.8 percent, not seasonally

adjusted.

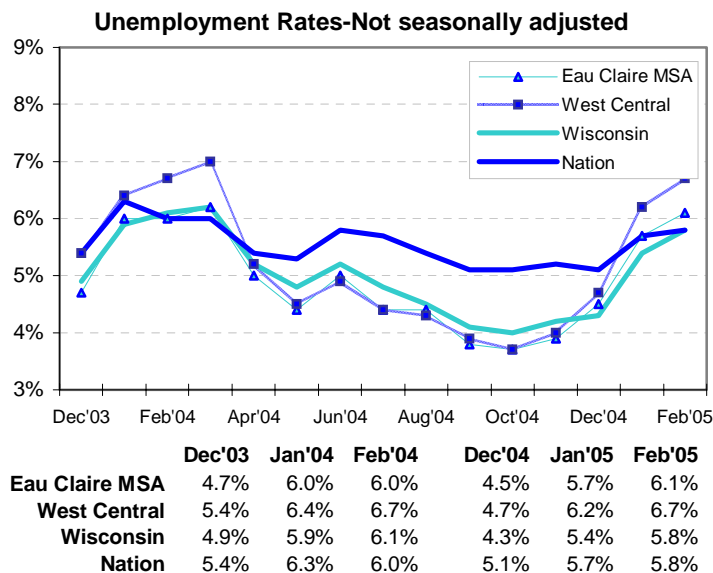
The number of unemployed in the region increased by 1,400 even though the estimate of employed also rose. Encouraged by warm temperatures in mid-February, and the possibility of finding a job, jobseekers entered the labor market looking for work. The number of unemployed in the region increased from 14,940 in January to 16,390 in February. Out of a total labor in February of 243,050, roughly

226,600 were employed.

Employment increased in only three of the nine counties but this was sufficient to generate the region-wide increase of 640. The three counties with more employed residents included the combined Chippewa-Eau Claire County area with an additional 1,170 jobholders and Dunn County where employment rose by 20. Nearly all of the additional jobs were associated with state government and, that in turn, is primarily associated with the state universities and workers reporting back from winter break and the delay in payroll reports.

Over-riding the effect of increased employment was the increase in the number of unemployed, not only in the three counties just listed but in nearly every county in the region.

In the combined Eau Claire-Chippewa area the number of unemployed rose from 4,815 in January to 5,230 in February. This increase produced the rise in the metropolitan area unemployment rate to 6.1 percent in February from 5.7 percent in January. In Dunn County the number of unemployed in-



Civilian Labor Force Estimates* for West Central Wisconsin counties: February 2005

	Barron			Chippewa			Clark			Dunn			Eau Claire Co.		
	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04
Labor force	24,721	24,526	25,344	31,715	31,066	31,920	16,905	16,866	17,653	22,747	22,527	23,983	54,232	53,297	54,784
Employed	22,623	22,755	23,299	29,192	28,768	29,461	15,471	15,508	16,218	21,253	21,232	22,455	51,528	50,780	52,004
Unemployed	2,098	1,771	2,045	2,523	2,298	2,459	1,434	1,358	1,435	1,494	1,295	1,528	2,704	2,517	2,780
% unemployed	8.5	7.2	8.1	8.0	7.4	7.7	8.5	8.1	8.1	6.6	5.7	6.4	5.0	4.7	5.1
	Pepin			Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			West Central region		
	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04
Labor force	3,759	3,765	3,898	23,345	23,462	23,068	22,920	22,808	23,416	42,705	42,637	42,457	243,049	240,954	246,523
Employed	3,451	3,480	3,609	22,060	22,163	21,834	21,118	21,179	21,477	39,966	40,153	39,558	226,662	226,018	229,915
Unemployed	308	285	289	1,285	1,299	1,234	1,802	1,629	1,939	2,739	2,484	2,899	16,387	14,936	16,608
% unemployed	8.2	7.6	7.4	5.5	5.5	5.3	7.9	7.1	8.3	6.4	5.8	6.8	6.7	6.2	6.7

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for West Central Wisconsin: February 2005

(Employment in thousands)	Barron			Clark			Dunn			Pepin		
	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04
Total Nonfarm	21.0	21.0	21.0	9.9	9.9	9.7	15.4	15.3	16.1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Manufacturing	5.5	5.5	5.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Trade	3.5	3.6	3.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Transportation & Utilities	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.6	1.6	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.1
Financial Activities	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	2.6	2.6	2.5	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.7	1.7	1.6	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.6	1.6	1.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
Info/Prof. & Bus.Serv./Other	1.6	1.6	1.5	0.8	0.7	0.7	1.3	1.4	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total Government	4.5	4.4	4.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.5	3.4	4.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			Eau Claire MSA		
	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04	Feb '05	Jan '05	Feb '04
Total Nonfarm	10.5	10.3	10.2	14.6	14.6	14.7	26.7	26.7	26.4	77.0	75.2	76.4
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.5	1.5	1.4	2.8	2.8	2.4
Manufacturing	0.8	0.8	0.8	3.5	3.5	3.6	5.4	5.4	5.5	10.3	10.3	10.2
Trade	0.9	0.9	1.0	2.0	2.1	2.0	4.4	4.5	4.4	12.7	12.9	13.0
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.8	2.8	2.8
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.5	1.3	1.3	1.2	3.8	3.8	3.7
Education & Health Services	1.2	1.2	1.2	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	12.9	12.8	12.5
Leisure & Hospitality	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.4	2.9	2.9	2.9	6.7	6.6	7.1
Information/Prof. & Bus.Serv.	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.9	1.9	1.7	3.6	3.6	3.5	8.5	8.5	8.2
Other Services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.7	3.6	3.7
Total Government	4.1	3.9	3.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	3.6	3.5	3.7	12.8	11.1	12.8

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2004 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

creased by 200 to 1,490 in February and the unemployment followed with an increase from 5.7 percent in January to 6.6 percent.

The increase in the number of unemployed was not the result of major lay offs in the area, nor did it occur because of an increase in the number of residents filing claims for unemployment compensation. The number of residents filing unemployment claims declined during the month from 9,075 in mid-January to 7,290 by mid-February. There were additional lay offs during the month but they were mostly associated with reductions from construction and retail trade employers in the area, and some seasonal manufacturing reductions in a few counties.

In the nine-county region the number of jobs with construction employers declined from 7,140 in January to 7,000 in February. Every county in the region reported a loss in construc-

tion employment in February. Eight of the nine counties also reported reductions in trade employment. The total number of jobs in the west central region in trade declined from 28,450 in January to 28,090 in February. The only county to report an increase in trade was Dunn. Both construction and trade employment will rebound quickly as spring and summer hiring begins.

In addition to the increased employment with government, employers in several other industries were actively adding workers to their payroll. Employers in education and health services added 120 new workers in February, leisure and hospitality employers added 245 workers and employers in information, professional and business services added 100 workers. Overall, employers in the region added over 2,000 jobs in February, resulting in an increase of over 600 additional jobs in the region from a year ago.

The February estimates for most of

the region's counties reflect increased activity from jobseekers. Only in Barron and Dunn counties does the increase in number of unemployed reflect an increase in the number of residents filing claims for unemployment compensation benefits and in both counties the increase in claims reflects seasonal lay offs.

The unemployment rate in Barron County increased from 7.2 percent in January to 8.5 percent in February, the largest increase of any county in the state. Dunn County unemployment increased from 5.7 to 6.6 percent. In Clark County the unemployment rate increased from 8.1 to 8.5 percent while in Pepin County the unemployment rate increased from 7.6 percent in January to 8.2 percent in February. The rate increased in Polk County from 7.1 to 7.9 percent and in St. Croix County from 5.8 to 6.4 percent. The rate in Pierce County did not change from 5.5 percent in January.



Find the most current Labor Market Information at: www.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

Direct questions and comments to: **Beverly Gehrke, Labor Market Analyst**
 Hayward Job Center, 15618 Windrose Lane, Ste. 108, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843
 715-634-5289 715-634-6094(FAX) e-mail: Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us